



## **The High Cost of a Park Giveaway: What It Means for North Carolina**

July 16, 2025

---

President Trump's plan to transfer national parks to state control would devastate North Carolina's economy, overwhelm its budget, and dismantle the systems that keep public lands running.

Here's what North Carolina stands to lose:

### **\$4.1 billion in Economic Output**

In 2023, 20.9 million visitors to North Carolina's national parks spent an estimated \$2.6 billion, supporting:

- 38,800 jobs
- \$1.5 billion in labor income
- \$4.1 billion in economic output

Reduced visitation from degraded services, lost NPS branding, and higher state fees would hit small businesses and rural economies hard.

### **\$646 Million in Deferred Maintenance**

North Carolina's national parks face a \$646 million maintenance backlog, including a portion of the \$557 million estimated for the Blue Ridge Parkway. Under state control, North Carolina would inherit this cost without access to federal repair funding like the \$1.3 billion per year from the Great American Outdoors Act.

### **Millions in Annual Operating Costs**

North Carolina primarily funds state parks with a combination of resources from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Under state control, North Carolina would have to add entrance fees, take the money out of state budgets, or close parks.

### **Over 270 New State Employees Needed**

North Carolina would need to hire approximately 272 new employees to match current NPS staffing levels.